

**GRAVE-DIGGING MAN** (at the Slocan Park Cemetery) © Allan Markin

Big John was a grave-digging man

In the dead of winter and the hot summer sun

We were his crew, did everything he said

He said "Do it right boys, or you'll insult the dead"

Big John did graveside geometry

Laid out each grave as perfect as could be

He told us to do our very best

'Cause God rewards perfection, and the devil takes the rest

By noon the grave was ready, just as the hearse arrived

The singers with their psalms and hymns, followed close behind

They bore the pall so slowly up the muddy hill

Leaning on our shovels, we stood so very still

John gave the formal greetings, he knew every word

He spoke very loud and clear, so everybody heard

Then praying and wailing were the only sounds

As we slid her coffin gently, into the rocky ground

The Lord's Prayer was recited, grief was full expressed

Birds flew in the brilliant sky, searching for their nests

Close up the grave, Big John said, the soft dirt first is best

Rocks come later, he told us, we must not disturb her rest

Then big John said, when I pass on, please do the same for me

We shook his hand, slapped his back, and pledged to set him free

He smiled and said "I taught you well, that's how one's life should end

By moving to perfection, it's just around the bend

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